

S-E-C-R-E-T

C E N T R A L I N T E L L I G E N C E A G E N C Y

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

23 August 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Deputy Director for Plans
Chief, Africa Division
Chief, European Division
Chief, Far East Division
Chief, Near East Division
Chief, Soviet Bloc Division
Chief, Western Hemisphere Division

As the DDP will have indicated to you, the DCI is interested in having a paper written on the subject outlined on the attachment and has asked me to solicit views within the Agency. Could you indicate to me whether you can attend a discussion on Thursday, August 24, at 1430 p.m. (Room 7E62)?

25X1

S-E-C-R-E-T

GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

S-E-C-R-E-T

Attachment

QUESTION: What would be the effects on American interests and on the American world position of a failure to achieve our stated objectives in Vietnam?

ASSUMPTION: The failure comes about not by sudden collapse or abandonment of the US effort but in consequence of a process of negotiation and a political settlement which in the end results in the achievement of Communist aims. This outcome will not be so long deferred as to obscure the fact that American policy and arms have suffered an important reverse.

PROPOSED MAIN TOPICS

General Effects

(1) It goes without saying that in many quarters there would be a reappraisal of American power and will, and of the wisdom of our policies. In a sense, international politics is the sum of calculations made by all the actors concerning the power and intentions of all others. The US has been viewed as the most powerful actor in the game. Is there any way to measure, and to state plausibly, a general effect proceeding from all the re-calculations that would inevitably be made?

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

Attachment

(2) In particular, what is to be made of the proposition that many states to which the US has defense commitments would no longer regard these as reliable?

The Far East and the US Role There.

(3) What implications would there be for the future of Southeast Asia? Are Hanoi's aspirations limited to the control of South Vietnam? How would Chinese aims and conduct in the region be affected? What would be the repercussions for the internal stability and the external alignment of non-Communist states in the area?

(4) Would the assumed outcome in Vietnam have a bearing on the struggle of internal forces in China, and therefore on the long-term prospects of Chinese-American relations?

(5) How would present US security relationships in the Far East be affected -- for example, as a result of inferences drawn in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan?

The Communist Insurgency Problem.

(6) The argument has been made that Vietnam is a test of the effectiveness of Communist insurgency. Would Communist parties in other areas be led to imitate the Vietnamese, i.e., parties

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

Attachment

which would not otherwise have resorted to insurgency and civil war? Can areas where this is likely to occur be identified? Would there be a tendency for the Communist movement generally to coalesce in support of greater reliance on armed violence?

USSR

(7) What effects can be foreseen on Soviet attitudes, and on the prospects of Soviet-American relations?

Europe

(8) What conclusions might be drawn in Western Europe, and how would the Atlantic Alliance be affected?

S-E-C-R-E-T